

**Project Overview:**

This project was developed for students in English 9 classes. One of their novels, semester one, is *Bless The Beasts and Children* by Glendon Swarthout. Students will apply their knowledge of using online data bases to the topic of animal cruelty in this novel. Some sites are provided.

**Objectives: (Gr. 9)**

1. Students will effectively access the NebraskAccess website and its resources such as the Wilson OmniFile service.
2. Students will document their sources of information.
3. Students will analyze primary sources in order to understand animal rights.
4. Students will locate valid and reliable information on legal/illegal hunting of buffalo/animal rights.

**Standards Addressed:****1. AASL**

- 1 The student who is information literate evaluates information critically and competently.
- 1.1.4 Learners will use skills, resources, and tools to find, evaluate, and select appropriate sources to answer questions.

**2. Nebraska L.E.A.R.N.S. Standards**

- 8.1.2 By the end of the eighth grade, students will identify, locate, and use multiple resources to access specific information. (Use general reference materials [dictionary, thesaurus, encyclopedia, atlas, telephone book, almanac]; use electronic resources [CD-ROM, software programs, online resources]; use library resources [card or electronic catalog, periodicals, and other informational text]; use multimedia resources [video/audio tapes].)
- 8.2.5 By the end of the eighth grade, students will demonstrate the ability to use self-generated questions, note taking, summarizing and outlining while learning.  
Example indicators:
  - Generate questions, take notes, and summarize information gleaned from reference works and experts.
  - Use and document references.
- 12.1.2 By the end of twelfth grade, students will locate, evaluate, and use primary and secondary sources for research.

**Materials Needed:**

1. Computer lab with web access (General Purpose lab in LHS' Media Center); one computer per student.

2. Handouts for each student; pen or pencil; dictionaries.

3. Websites:

- [www.animalconcerns.org](http://www.animalconcerns.org)
- [www.peta.org](http://www.peta.org)
- [www.arconference.org](http://www.arconference.org)
- [www.animal-rights.com](http://www.animal-rights.com)
- [www.homesteadlodgemaine.com/buffalo\\_hunting.asp](http://www.homesteadlodgemaine.com/buffalo_hunting.asp)
- [www.rstgfp.net/Hunting/Buffero/buffalo.html](http://www.rstgfp.net/Hunting/Buffero/buffalo.html)
- [www.buffalofieldcampaign.org/legislative/bisonhuntingbill.html](http://www.buffalofieldcampaign.org/legislative/bisonhuntingbill.html)
- [www.pet-abuse.com/database/](http://www.pet-abuse.com/database/)
- [www.thbison.com](http://www.thbison.com)
- [www.buffalokranch.com](http://www.buffalokranch.com)
- [www.davefredrickson.com](http://www.davefredrickson.com)
- [www.geocities.com/SoHo/Atrium/4832/buffalo2.html](http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Atrium/4832/buffalo2.html)
- [www.hunter-ed.com/az/course/ch7\\_why\\_hunting\\_laws.htm](http://www.hunter-ed.com/az/course/ch7_why_hunting_laws.htm)
- [www.fws.gov/SOUTHWEST/refuges/texas/Buffero%20LakeHuntingEA.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/SOUTHWEST/refuges/texas/Buffero%20LakeHuntingEA.pdf)
- [www.harpers.org/archive/2008/06/0082064](http://www.harpers.org/archive/2008/06/0082064)
- [www.friendsofanimals.org/news/2004/march/wolfshooting-speeds-up.html](http://www.friendsofanimals.org/news/2004/march/wolfshooting-speeds-up.html)
- [www.blm.gov/rmpweb/application/index.cfm?rmpid=101](http://www.blm.gov/rmpweb/application/index.cfm?rmpid=101)

4. *NebraskAccess* [database]. (n.d.). Retrieved May 15, 2009, from <http://nebraskaccess.ne.gov>

### **Anticipatory Set:**

Prior to using the computer lab –

Students will have a classroom discussion/create definitions of:

- being an advocate for someone
- what it means to be a misfit
- what happens when people/animals are powerless
- masculinity
- being a hero

Students will discuss:

- symbolism in literature
- author's purpose
- characterization

Students were given a lesson during the first month of school as to how to use the LHS Library Media resources. It would be beneficial to have them review this before going to the computer lab.

### **Lab Lesson:**

1. Introduce students to *NebraskAccess*. Share purpose of the site and accessing information. (Using the LHS Media Center handout, students go to the site address and click on Databases Available to Nebraskans.
2. Hand out questions.
3. Inform students that you would like them to find the website they need to answer these questions through *NebraskAccess*, using good searching strategies.
4. Questions:
  - See handout below; the quotations handout is directly related to the buffalo hunting issue.

**Adaptations:**

Special Education: Students will follow the IEP measures predetermined for their skill level.

**Formative Assessment: (10 pts)**

Handout in class:

1. Ability to find the site on their own plus add 4 new ones.

**Summative Assessment: (20 pts)**

Each student will be required to create 5 new questions using why, how and what if prompts that must be answered from the sites.

These questions will be answered by the following method: Per. 5 class will answer per. 8 questions; per. 6 class will answer per. 5 questions; per. 8 class will answer per. 6 questions.

We will debrief in the classroom; a must-do is to discuss whether or not new sites were accessed.

## Media Center Work

Name\_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of this work is to see information on hunting (whether legal or illegal); later, you will discuss how this information connects with the book *Bless The Beasts and Children*.

1. Why would some people pay to hunt buffalo?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How much does it cost?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What equipment/preparation does a hunter need?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Why would some people be against legal hunting?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What can be done to stop legal hunting of buffalo?

**Introduction to *Bless the Beasts and Children* by Glendon Swarthout**

Name\_\_\_\_\_ Per. \_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions to prepare for this novel: (a dictionary is needed)

1. Define symbolism:

2. Describe a symbol of your high school:

3. Describe a symbol of your country:

4. Describe a symbol of you:

5. What does a buffalo symbolize?

6. Choose two different animals and explain clearly how each one senses danger--

Animal 1\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Animal 2\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. How do humans sense danger?

8. How do you sense danger?

## Important Quotations

*"There was more here than profaned the eye or ear or nose or heart. There was more here than mere destruction. The American soul itself was involved, its anthropology."*

### Explanation for Quotation

This quote is from Chapter 11. It is about the role of the buffalo as a national symbol and as a symbol of the American West in particular. Years ago the buffalo roamed freely in the West, and had more thickly populated the land. The annual tradition of slaughter, instituted by the government in order to thin out the herd, undermined this ancestry and this symbol. Above and beyond the cruelty implicated in both the act and method of killing, The author, Swarthout, takes issue with the carelessness with which the government treats these beasts.

*"For a moment, or moments, it was as it had been in the beginning, before fear, before evil, before death, at the time of the creation, when the earth was new and living things flourished therein, where the earth was fair and all living things dwelt together as kindred. For a moment, or moments, beasts and children were friends, there in the sweetness and silence of the night, there in the calm and lovely fields of the Lord."*

### Explanation for Quotation

This quote is from the end of Chapter 16. It makes reference to the similarities between the buffaloes and the Bedwetters. The author also uses this communion between man and beast to draw similarities between the two. Swarthout believes in the power of the buffaloes to bring peace and harmony to those who treat them with kindness. Instinctually using scent, the animals determine the absence or presence of danger; the boys become at ease with the animals and experience a certain entirely novel tenderness and peace, which they have never before experienced with human beings. Swarthout believes in the power of nature in creating this timeless and innocent connection.

*"A living buffalo mocks us. It has no place or purpose. It is a misbegotten child, a monster with which we cannot live and which we cannot live without. Therefore we slay, and slay again, for while a single buffalo remains, the sin of our fathers, and hence our own, is imperfect. But the slaughter of the buffalo is part of something larger. It is as though the land of Canaan into which we were led was too divine, and until we have done it every violence, until we have despoiled and murdered and dirtied every blessing, until we have erased every reminder of our original rape, until we have washed our hands of the bloods of every other, we shall be unappeased. It is as though we are too proud to be beholden to Him. We cannot bear the goodness of God."*

### Explanation for Quotation

At the end of Chapter 11, Swarthout implicitly comments once again on the similar situations of the buffaloes and the misfit campers. In using the metaphor, "a misbegotten child," hints at this connection. The Bedwetters have been "warehoused" at Box Canyon Boys Camp because, like the buffaloes, they "have no place or purpose." Swarthout once again links the beasts and boys by implying that society has no appreciation for these misfits who, despite their oddities and disorders, possess redeemable qualities. Furthermore, the author comments on man's capacity for cruel behavior and destruction, despite the wealth God has given him.

*"They had a last glimpse of John Cotton's red hair flaming like a torch as the truck seemed to soar and dive and disappear. And that was all, except for the remote but unmistakable concussion of metal and rock and the recognition of its meaning, which, microseconds later, cracked their hearts even as it freed them, too, forever."*

#### **Explanation for Quotation**

This quote is from Chapter 20. It provides the Bedwetters with their last living image of Cotton. Despite the sadness of his death, which "cracked their hearts," this image strikes us as triumphant and celebratory. Cotton lived, and died, with tremendous power and strength. The mention of his "red hair flaming like a torch" seems to speak to the intensity with which he lived and to the strength of his personality.

*"Born on this preserve, fear of men had been bred out of them. Inoculated against disease, they were prime. Fed hay when winter snows covered their browse, they followed a feed truck about like sheep. They had never known the arrow or the lance, the lightning or the fire which crazed their ancestors over cliffs and into swollen rivers, nor had they known, until yesterday, the sounds and implication of a gun."*

#### **Explanation for Quotation**

This quote from Chapter 11, in which Swarthout describes in gory detail the buffalo killings, speaks to the sudden shock of the death of these creatures. However, to Swarthout this does not represent the greatest injustice done to them; rather, their lack of freedom and instinct signified their status as completely different creatures from their ancestors.